GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:255
ANSWERED ON:14.03.2001
INDIANS LANGUISHING IN SAUDI ARABIAN JAILS
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Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether several Indians are languishing in Saudi Arabian jails;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the legal assistance provided to them and other steps taken to secure their release?

Answer

MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH)

(a) As per available information, the number of Indians in Saudi Arabian jails as on 31.12.2000 was 1677.

(b) The prisoners are jailed after having been found guilty of crimes such as theft, consumption of liquor, violation of local labour laws, murder, smuggling etc.

(c) In Saudi Arabia, judicial proceedings and punishments to criminals are determined by the Shariat.Accordingly no lawyers are permitted in court. However, as soon as the Indian Mission receives information about the arrest of an Indian national it makes a formal request for consular access. The Mission submits mercy petitions on behalf of the individuals concerned, if so desired by the accused, with the local Government and also approaches the Saudi government for release of Indian prisoners on humanitarian grounds and recommends the names of prisoners for Royal pardon during the holy month of Ramadan. In cases of fraud and embezzlement where the detainees are required to pay blood money or indemnity amount, the Mission coordinates with families of the detainees so as to ensure their early release from jails.